

**Vestry Minutes**  
**The Church of St. Michael and St. George**  
**6345 Wydown Blvd., Clayton, Mo. 63105**

**November 21, 2019**

**Vestry Members in Attendance:** The Rev. Andrew Archie, Betsy Douglass (*Sr. Warden*), Ian Hagemann (*Clerk*), Joe Freund, Todd Glass, Harrison Heil, Nic Ayling, Betsy Panke (*Jr. Warden*), Lulu Stribling, Bruce Springer, Mary Ann Cook, Jan Jacobi, Stephanie Nash, McKay Mills

**Clergy Assistants in Attendance:** Fr. Tom Albinson (*Asst. Rector*), Fr. Peter Speropulos (*Asst. Rector*)

**Guests:** Alexis Posnanski (*Stewardship and Giving*), Mike Zaccarello (*Treasurer*), Laurie Brown (*Fellowship*), Jim Holbrook (*Strategic Planning*)

**Vestry Members Not in Attendance:** Ian Mackey, Craig Anzilotti

**Attachments/Handouts:** Vestry Agenda; September Minutes; Sunday Attendance; Strategic Plan “Preview” for the Vestry; FaithfullyForward Survey Results; Financial Report; Senior Warden’s Report; “Want Millennials Back in the Pews? Stop Trying to Make Church ‘Cool’” (Rachel Held Evans)

**Proceedings:**

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by the Rector. Each member of the Vestry gave thanks for events in their life.

*Strategic Planning*—Jim Holbrook provided an update and separate survey results. The committees include Operations, Stewardship, Church + School, Parishioner Engagement, Communications, and Community Development.

Headlines of the recommendations from strategic planning: Our vision and mission will not change from what was written 15 years ago. We are far better off than most, with our loyal parish, high satisfaction, beloved liturgy and well-regarded clergy (survey and focus group feedback). Areas for improvement: Parishioners want to be more involved, and our building needs help.

Strategies are described on the handout. In brief, they include moving to summer schedule year-round; music that’s more uplifting and singable for all; pastoral care to be more organized and responsive (recognizing the difficulty of doing so, but ways to do it are not specifically addressed in the strategic plan, as it is clergy-driven); increasing connectivity with the school and clarifying the school’s relation to the church; addressing funding, since 87% say they pledge, but 72% feel the church is underfunded; a capital

campaign is needed for the building, with some discussion about when; more local presence/impact is desired; more credit received and taken for what we're doing; more parishioner engagement; free up clergy to focus on pastoral care; optimize operations; improve communications. The final plan will have many recommendations around each of these areas. It will be presented to Fr. Andrew and the Sr. Warden; if agreed, it will be presented at the Annual Meeting.

A slide deck showing survey results is provided, and is posted in the hallway, but note that it is not considered final, although the numbers are not going to change. Note that the numbers should be looked at holistically. The demographics suggest an aging congregation that is generally satisfied, particularly in older age groups. Parishioners do want more programming. A question is asked: how can that be, when there is programming every day of the week? It is a paradox. The answer may lie in the perception that programming is handed down from above instead of being driven by parishioners.

*Stewardship (Alexis Posnanski)*—We have received 245 pledges for \$1,383,600; 38 pledges are new; and units that pledged last year but not yet this year represent \$382,000 that we would hope to receive in additional pledges. The Vestry will also Dial for Dollars on the Monday after Thanksgiving (December 2). The leaflet this weekend will include a list of those who have pledged.

*Financial Report (Mike Zaccarello)*— In October we had a net loss of approximately \$60,000. Decreased revenues were due to decreased pledge receipts, despite some increases in special gifts. Expenses to date were \$2,278,000, \$5,000 unfavorable to budget. At this point we are at a deficit of \$173,000 for the year. On our balance sheet, our net asset position is approx. \$14,000,000. Our line of credit is at \$625,000, some \$50,000 higher than the same time last year; we hope to pay this back in December. At an earlier Vestry meeting we approved increasing the line of credit to \$1 million, but the bank has raised some structural aspects of this that will be discussed at the next Finance Committee meeting. Mike's recommendation is going to be to increase the line of credit to \$1.1 million to give additional headroom. The Committee is working on the 2020 budget based on preliminary pledge levels, with the goal of a breakeven budget. This proposal will be presented to the Vestry in February.

A question is asked about the way in which the decision is made to increase or decrease various expenditures. The answer is that in the Episcopal Church, this is the Rector's prerogative, but motions may be made from the Vestry.

A motion to approve the report is made, seconded and adopted.

A motion is made to allow the Finance Committee to request the previously discussed line of credit increase of \$200,000 (to \$1,100,000), seconded and adopted.

*Senior Warden's Report (Betsy Douglass)*—This is her last Vestry meeting, as her term is ending. However, she will still give us a party (potluck) on December 8. There is

renewed energy for nurturing the spiritual lives of parishioners of all ages. The women's retreats are well attended; the Monday Bible studies are well led by Fr. Peter, and consist of about 20 women of all age groups. Steak and Stories and the Brotherhood of St. Andrew provide fellowship to the men of the parish. Mary Beth Tipton is renewing the children's Church School. A new youth minister has been hired, with thanks to Jess Speropulos who stepped up during the search process. The clergy continue to work incredibly hard as they keep the church running, and we should remember to thank the clergy and staff whenever we can. The strategic plan has shown areas of strength and opportunities for growth, including church/school communication and outreach ministries. Alexis Posnanski has done a great job so far in increasing engagement of major and new donors. Sincere thanks from Betsy for the opportunity to serve on this supportive and cooperative Vestry.

*Rector's Report*—Jim's numbers are true, in regard to the preponderance of older pledgers; but in the recession, what is striking is the number of younger faces. Fr. Andrew has tried to mirror this in the program and staffing for the last ten years. All Western Christian churches tend to have more women in church than men; not so for Orthodox churches. The ratio can be as high as 65:35! But here, more often than not, we are close to parity;—a sign of a church that resonates with the spiritual life of both sexes.

Kyle Tallman has been hired as Youth Minister. He has more experience than any prior Youth Minister, and his salary therefore exceeds any prior, but we look forward to his contributions. His wife Rachel and children Harper and Wyatt (5 and 2) will be joining us with an expected January 1 start date.

Clergy turnover in the diocese reminds one of the difficulty of ministry, perhaps not because of the difficulty of the tasks as much as their velocity. Opportunities for renewal are important, and so are opportunities to appreciate the clergy, including assistants.

Because of the threat of school shootings, SMSOC will be offering intruder training by the Clayton Police; also, this will be offered to the church staff. We have many exits—which means we have many entrances. Remember that the worst school shooting happened in the most heavily reinforced school.

*Evangelism Committee Report (Fr. Peter and Jan Jacobi)*—The committee has examined the possibility of diversifying the Sunday 5:30 service, which is (unexpectedly) a Rite II service. Rite II, too, contains dated midcentury language. In the 1970s, all human beings were being referred to as men.

In St. Mary's Chapel, the space feels intimate. In St. George's, it feels distractingly cold. The idea would be to incorporate music, but we hesitate to use the term "contemporary", which means 1990s. Worship style will hardly save the church, and our traditionalism may be our asset. The 70s to 90s gave us songs about us, which God doesn't need to hear. There may be opportunities to understand what other churches like us are doing differently. Realize, there is a road leading from evangelical churches

back to liturgical churches. Is holding a contemporary service part of evangelism? No one comes to church because they saw a contemporary service on the website; they come because someone invited them. The purpose would be to accomplish something at the 5:30 service that we are not accomplishing now. We want to be careful not to alienate the core group that values that service.

A question is asked as to the goal of the change. Fr. Peter answers that it may be to provide a more accessible entry point (you and your instead of thou and thy).

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved, seconded and approved.

**New Business:** Convention starts tomorrow (11/22/19). Betsy Panke shows the new Columbarium pamphlet. The Columbarium is a source of anticipated future income.

**Upcoming dates:** The Vestry Christmas Party will be December 8. The Annual Meeting is set for January 19, 2020.

Adjourned at 8:30 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ian Hagemann, Clerk of the Vestry